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Amended Claims

1. A method of manufacturing feed pellets having a relatively high fat content, e.g. in the form of added oil and which, during manufacturing, are processed in an atmosphere exhibiting a pressure lower than ambient pressure, and wherein the pellets are subjected to a drying process, characterized in that a pressure reduction is put on immediately subsequently to a pellet extrusion process, within a pellet chamber at the downstream side of the pellet extruder's discharge nozzle, in order to cause the pellet material to expand and bring about an increase in pore volume rendering possible a high fat content in the finished feed pellets.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the pellets are subjected to said reduced pressure for a period of time in the order of a few seconds up to about one minute, and that the following drying process is carried out at a reduced pressure in relation to the environment, at a temperature lower than 100°C.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the drying process is carried out in an oil bath which also acts as a deep-frying treatment.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, characterized in that an after-treatment immediately following the pellet extrusion, downstream of the discharge nozzle, is carried out at a first

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reduced pressure, the subsequently following drying process being carried out at a second reduced pressure.

5. A plant for use in implementing the method as defined in claim 1, comprising a pellet chamber (3), preferably incorporated into the plant immediately following a pelletizing machine (1), an extrusion device for pellets or a similar apparatus for shaping pellets or blanks for pellets, as well as a tank (8) containing oil, characterized in that the pellet chamber (3)is adapted to be kept at a lower pressure than ambient pressure, e.g. in the order of 100-800 millibar, said pellet chamber (3) having an outlet (5) which, directly or indirectly, leads into said oil tank (8) constituting a deep-frying container and, moreover, is adapted to be kept at a pressure lower than ambient pressure, e.g. in the order of 100-800 millibar.

6. A plant as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that between the pellet chamber (3) and the oil tank (8), a lock body (6) is disposed.

7. A plant as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the lock body (6) is adapted to rotate, in order to allow continuous feeding of pellets out from the pellet chamber (3).

8. A plant as claimed in claim 5 or 6, characterized in that to the pellet chamber (3) is assigned a first vacuum pump (4) adapted to keep the air pressure within the pellet chamber (3) at a first desired value lower than ambient pressure,

and that to the oil tank (8) is assigned a second vacuum pump (9 adapted to keep the air pressure within the oil tank (8) at a second desired value lower than ambient pressure, possibly also lower than said first value.

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